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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 001968

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR IO/UNP, PMAT AND PM/RSAT

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: NEW UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON IRAQ WOULD  
EASE POLITICAL COST FOR GOC OF DEPLOYMENT TO IRAQ

REF: A. STATE 256573

[B](#). ZAGREB 1364

CLASSIFIED BY: POLOFF A.F.GODFREY FOR REASONS 1.5 (B,D)

SUMMARY

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[1](#)1. (C) PASSAGE OF A NEW UNSCR AUTHORIZING A UN-MANDATED MULTINATIONAL FORCE UNDER UNIFIED U.S. COMMAND WOULD MAKE THE GOC'S TASK OF SECURING PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL TO DEPLOY A CROATIAN CONTINGENT OF TROOPS TO IRAQ MUCH EASIER. DEPLOYMENT TO IRAQ REMAINS POLITICALLY SENSITIVE. WITH ELECTIONS EXPECTED IN NOVEMBER, THE GOC WOULD WELCOME THE POLITICAL COVER OF A NEW UN MANDATE. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) ON JUNE 12, CROATIA'S GOVERNMENT MADE A POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO DEPLOY A MILITARY CONTINGENT TO IRAQ (REF B), BUT PM RACAN'S CABINET HAS NOT YET SUBMITTED A FORMAL DECISION TO THE PARLIAMENT FOR RATIFICATION. A CROATIAN LIAISON OFFICER ARRIVED AT CENTCOM ON SEPTEMBER 3 TO GATHER DETAILS THE PARLIAMENT WILL REQUIRE TO APPROVE DEPLOYMENT. DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES TO IRAQ REMAINS VERY POLITICALLY SENSITIVE. PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST DEPLOYMENT OF A CROATIAN CONTINGENT REMAINS HIGH, ALTHOUGH CROATIA'S POLITICAL LEADERS UNDERSTAND THAT MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO COLLECTIVE SECURITY IS EXPECTED OF COUNTRIES WHICH ASPIRE TO NATO MEMBERSHIP.

[1](#)3. (C) SPEEDY PASSAGE OF A NEW UNSCR AUTHORIZING A UN-MANDATED MULTINATIONAL FORCE UNDER UNIFIED U.S. COMMAND WOULD MAKE THE GOC'S POLITICAL TASK MUCH EASIER. (IN A SEPTEMBER 9 DISCUSSION ON OTHER ISSUES, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER IVAN SIMONOVIC RAISED THE ISSUE OF CROATIA'S POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE COALITION, AND MADE PRECISELY THIS POINT TO THE DCM.) PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ARE EXPECTED IN NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR, AND LEADING COALITION POLITICIANS WOULD WELCOME THE ADDITIONAL POLITICAL COVER A NEW RESOLUTION WOULD PROVIDE. THE GOC MAY CHOOSE TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEW UNSCR IS PASSED BEFORE FORWARDING ITS FORMAL DECISION ON DEPLOYMENT FOR PARLIAMENTARY RATIFICATION. CROATIA'S PARLIAMENT IS EXPECTED TO DISSOLVE ITSELF IN MID-OCTOBER TO PREPARE FOR ELECTIONS, SO A PROLONGED DEBATE OVER THE RESOLUTION COULD MEAN THAT CROATIAN TROOPS WOULD NOT BE AUTHORIZED TO JOIN THE STABILIZATION FORCE BEFORE EARLY 2004. WITH CROATIA'S EU APPLICATION NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION, THE GOC WOULD AVOID TAKING ANY STEP TO WHICH THEY BELIEVE KEY EU MEMBER STATES MIGHT OBJECT.

[1](#)4. (C) WE HAVE REACHED A POINT IN OUR EFFORTS TO LOBBY CROATIAN POLITICIANS WHERE WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE CURRENT PARLIAMENT WILL APPROVE A GOC DECISION TO DEPLOY FORCES TO IRAQ. HOWEVER, IF THE RACAN CABINET CHOOSES TO DELAY FORWARDING A FORMAL DECISION TO THE LEGISLATURE PENDING THE OUTCOME OF DEBATE IN THE UNSC, THE CURRENT PARLIAMENT MAY NOT GET A CHANCE TO VOTE.  
FRANK

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